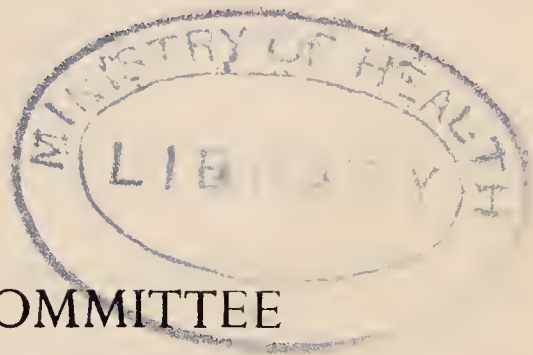


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WEST MERSEA
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

1953



PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

MR. E. P. DIGBY

MR. C. A. MUSSETT

MR. E. A. VINCE

MR. F. CASS, J.P.

Medical Officer of Health :

W. H. ALDERTON, M.C., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector :

E. J. BANNER, A.M.I.S.E., A.R.San.I.

REBOW CHAMBERS,

COLCHESTER.

24th May, 1954.

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report on the Health and Vital Statistics of the District for the year 1953.

The outstanding event of the year was the flooding caused by the high tides in January. Although much inconvenience and damage to property was caused, no deaths occurred.

The Birth Rate and the Death Rate show an increase on last year. In fact, the number of Deaths just exceeds the number of Births, for the second year in succession.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

W. H. ALDERTON.

WEST MERSEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
Statistics and Social Circumstances of the Area

Area	....	....	....	....	2683 acres
Registrar General's estimate of resident population, mid-1953	....	....	....	....	2971
Number of inhabited houses (end 1953) according to the Rate Book	....	....	....	....	1186
Rateable Value	....	....	....	....	£17,580
Sum represented by a penny rate	....	....	....	....	£68

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The District is an island community situated between the estuaries of the Rivers Blackwater and Colne. To the West and South-West there is a good deal of salt marsh.

The District enjoys a healthy situation, and is a popular summer resort with excellent sailing.

A large number of houses are owner-occupied, and there is little unemployment.

The main industries are agriculture, fishing, building and maintenance of yachts.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

		<i>Total</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	
<i>Live Births</i>	Legitimate	.... 40	19	21	{ Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated resident population—14.8. Corrected Birth Rate—18.5.
	Illegitimate	.... 4	2	2	
<i>Still Births</i>	Legitimate	.... —	—	—	{ Rate per 1000 total Births—2.2.
	Illegitimate	.... 1	1	—	
<i>Deaths</i>	....	.... 45	25	20	{ Death Rate per 1000 of estimated resident population—15.1. Comparability figure—.64. Corrected death rate—9.6.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes

				<i>Rate per 1000</i>
				<i>Deaths total Births</i>
Puerperal Sepsis	—
Other puerperal causes	—

Death Rate of Infants under 1 year of age (2)

All infants per 1000 live births	....	45
Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births	....	50
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births	....	—
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	....	11
„ „ Measles (all ages)	....	—
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	....	—

Deaths in the various age groups (local statistics)

<i>Age</i>		<i>No. of deaths</i>
0— 1 year	....	2
1— 2 years	....	—
2— 5 „	....	—
5—15 „	....	1
15—25 „	....	—

<i>Age</i>			<i>No. of Deaths</i>
25-35 years	....	....	2
35-45	„	....	—
45-55	„	....	1
55-65	„	....	6
65-75	„	....	6
75-85	„	....	15
85 and upwards	....	....	12
			<u>45</u>

CAUSES OF DEATH				<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
Cancer	....	....	....	7	4
Vascular disease of the nervous system			....	6	4
Heart Disease	....	....	....	6	4
Other Circulatory Disease		....	....	2	3
Influenza	....	....	....	1	1
Bronchitis	....	....	....	1	—
Other Respiratory Disease		....	....	1	—
Other Disease	....	....	....	1	4
				<u>25</u>	<u>20</u>

Diphtheria Immunisation

Diphtheria immunisation in the past has been so successful that people have forgotten the serious disease it set out to eradicate. In consequence there is a growing tendency to neglect the protection of children and infants.

Every opportunity is taken of instilling into parents the necessity of protection so that a reasonably high level of immunisation is maintained.

The figures at the end of December, 1953, were: —

<i>Population 0-4</i>	<i>Number immunised</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
248	131	52
<i>Population 5-14</i>	<i>Number immunised</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
434	408	91

National Assistance Acts, 1948-51

No action was taken under these Acts during the year.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority

The Medical Officer of Health—W. H. Alderton, M.C., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H. He is employed part-time; he devotes the remainder of his time to two neighbouring authorities and to the County Council.

The Sanitary Inspector—E. J. Banner, A.M.I.S.E., A.R.San.I. He is also employed as Surveyor to the Council.

Laboratory Facilities

Pathological specimens are sent to the laboratory attached to the Essex County Hospital, Colchester.

Samples of water for bacteriological analysis are sent to the Public Health Laboratory, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich.

Samples of water for complete analysis are sent to the Counties Public Health Laboratory, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Samples of ice cream and other foods are examined at the Public Health Laboratory, Ipswich.

Ambulance Facilities

Non-emergency ambulance calls are not accepted from the general public.

To obtain an ambulance in an emergency, it is merely necessary to lift the receiver and ask for an ambulance. If there is a dialling system in operation, dial "999", "O" or "O1" and ask for an ambulance.

Health Services provided by the Essex County Council

Ante-Natal and Post-Natal Clinics.

Maternity and Child Welfare Service.

Nursing in the Home.

Health Visiting.

Mental Welfare.

Home Help Service.

Vaccination and Diphtheria Immunisation.

Provision of Nursing Equipment and Apparatus.

School Health Service.

Ante-Natal and Post-Natal Clinics are held at the Health Service Clinic, Culver Street, Colchester, at 2.30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held at the Church Hall on the second Wednesday in each month at 2.15 p.m.

Assistance from the Home Help Service is obtained by communicating with the Area Organiser, Area Office, Trinity Street, Colchester, Telephone No. Colchester 4454.

Health Services provided by the Regional Hospital Board

Tuberculosis The Chest Clinic is situated at 3 Shewell Road, Colchester, and is open daily.

V.D. Sessions are held at the Essex County Hospital, Colchester, as under:—

Mondays 5–7 p.m. for Males and Females.

Fridays 2.30–3.30 p.m. for Females and Children.

3.30–4.30 p.m. for Males.

Certain specialist services are also provided. These are obtained through the School Medical Service.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA WATER

The Councils deep bore supplies water for nearly all the District except for a few houses in the eastern portion of the District. These houses are supplied by water from an adjoining authority, as their main at this point traverses the District.

The water is satisfactory in quantity, but is salty to the taste, and it contains a sufficient quantity of fluorine to cause mottling of the teeth. The water is chlorinated.

A typical analysis is given below:—

Chemical Results in Parts per Million

Appearance Very faint opalescence with a very slight deposit of amorphous mineral and traces of organic debris.

<i>Colour</i>	....	Nil	<i>Turbidity</i>	....	less than 3
<i>pH</i>	....	8.4	<i>Odour</i>	....	Nil
<i>Electric Conductivity</i>	....	3200	<i>Free Car. Dioxide</i>		Absent
<i>Chlorine present as</i>			<i>Total Solids</i>	....	2130
	<i>Chloride</i>	780	<i>Alkalinity as Calcium</i>		
				<i>Carbonate</i>	390
<i>Hardness Total</i>	....	75	<i>Carbonate</i>	75	<i>Non-Carbonate</i> 0
<i>Nitrate Nitrogen</i>	....	0.0	<i>Nitrate Nitrogen</i>		less than 0.01
<i>Ammoniacal Nitrogen</i>	....	0.76	<i>Oxygen Absorbed</i>	....	0.55
<i>Albuminoid Nitrogen</i>	....	0.013	<i>Residual Chlorine</i>	....	Nil
<i>Metals—Iron</i>	less than	0.03	<i>Other Metals</i>		Absent

Bacteriological Report

Plate Count. Yeastrel agar 2 days aerobically 37°C. 0 per ml.

Plate Count. Yeastrel 3 days at Room Temp. 4

Probable number of coliform bacilli McConkey 2 days

37°C. 0 per 100 ml.

Probable number of fæcal coli 0 per 100 ml.

Bacteriological findings satisfactory.

The number of houses supplied from the Council's mains is 990.

The number of houses supplied from the mains of the adjoining district is 31.

The number of houses supplied from standpipes is 57, with an approximate population of 70.

No extensions of water mains were carried out.

The number of houses connected to the mains during the year was 22.

HOUSING

The floods of early February, due to the unusually high tides, caused considerable damage to houseboats, and also dislodged most from their mud berths. Families displaced from the boats found alternative accommodation quickly and did not require re-housing by the Council.

The housing problem in the District is not very pressing. Quite a number of the houses are owner-occupied, and so the standard is higher than average. The number of houses built by the Council was 8. The number built by private enterprise was 15.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The Sewage Disposal plant has been working to full capacity, and there is evidence that it is in need of extension. Quite a quantity of untreated sewage passes down the effluent pipe each day, with consequent pollution of the foreshore.

During the year cases of typhoid occurred among visitors, the origin of which could be traced to the consumption of infected shell-fish gathered from the vicinity of the outfall pipe.

In consequence, notices have been erected warning persons of the danger of the practice.

The sewage from the houseboats still gives cause for anxiety, on account of the proximity of the oyster pits. This matter is constantly under consideration, in order to find a solution to a problem which might have serious consequences.

In early February a breakdown occurred at the Sewage Pumping Station which put the pumps out of action. In consequence of the

accumulation of sewage at this point, emergency pumping was organised, and the sewage was pumped into the estuary via a hillside field near the pumping station. The stand-by pump which would have avoided this trouble had been on order several months, and had not arrived by the end of the year.

REFUSE DISPOSAL

I am glad that the life of the present tip is coming to an end. It is hoped that the money available for the maintenance of the new tip will be sufficient to keep it properly managed and covered.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

Inspection of carcasses is undertaken at the Colchester abattoir, where animals destined for this District are slaughtered. Inspection of food premises is carried out regularly.

Number of Food Premises by Type of Business

Grocers and Provision Merchants	....	....	8
General Stores	....	....	8
Public Houses	....	....	4
Bakers	....	....	2
Butchers	....	....	3
Ice Cream	....	....	7
Cafés	....	....	6
School Canteen	....	....	1
Fish Shops	....	....	1

Number of Food Premises registered under Section 14 Food and Drugs Act

Sausages and potted meats	....	....	2
Ice cream premises	....	....	7

Milk and Dairies Regulations 1949

Dairies registered	....	....	3
Number of inspections of registered food premises	....	....	37
Method of disposal of condemned food: all condemned food is disposed of by burning.			

The following foods were surrendered voluntarily during the year: —

Tinned foods	....	....	93
Meat	....	....	37 lbs.
Cheese	....	....	8 lbs.

Food Poisoning

One case of food poisoning was notified; on investigation there were five persons at risk in the affected household, four of whom became ill. The cause was traced to sliced ham, which showed a profuse growth of staphylococcus pyrogenes.

None of the patients was severely ill.

WEST MERSEA URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1953

Inspections

Houses	....	....	....	196
Public Health Acts	....	....	....	32
Butchers' Shops	....	....	....	62

Fried Fish Shops	....	....	....	....	15
Ice Cream Stores	....	....	....	....	22
Dairies	....	....	....	....	12
Bakehouses	....	....	....	....	8
Factory Acts	....	....	....	....	20
Rat Infestations	....	....	....	....	30
Moveable Dwellings and Camping Sites	....	....	....	....	16

Sampling

Water Samples taken—Bacteriological	....	....	13
Chemical	....	....	2

Notices

Statutory, Public Health	....	....	Nil
Informal, Public Health and Housing	....	....	5
Informal, Public Health and Housing, complied with	....	....	4
No demolition or closing orders issued.			

E. J. BANNER, *Sanitary Inspector.*

MOSQUITOES

The District suffered more discomfort from mosquitoes than last year; this in spite of a similar amount of spraying of known breeding grounds.

Stagnant and brackish pools in an adjoining District were also dealt with. It is hoped that with more frequent spraying, better results will be obtained in the future. It must be remembered, however, that there is a considerable area of marsh land to the south-west, in the Maldon District, which may also have its quota of breeding grounds.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Cases of measles accounted for the majority of the infectious diseases notified; they did not, however, reach the total of those notified in 1951, when 69 cases were reported.

Details of the notifications are set out below:—

<i>Disease</i>	0-1	1-5	5-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	65+	<i>Total</i>
Measles ...	3	18	25	1	—	1	—	48
Scarlet Fever ...	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Whooping Cough...	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Food Poisoning ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Tuberculosis (Respiratory)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948

Routine inspections have been made under the Factories Acts and defects observed have been dealt with.

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to Health

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number of Register</i>	<i>Number of Inspections</i>
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	12	18
Cases in which defects were found	Nil

OUTWORK.

<i>Number of Outworkers on list</i>	Nil
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